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SEASONABLE HINTS
FROM AN
HONEST MAN

ON THE PRESENT IMPORTANT CRISIS OF A

NEW REIGN
AND A
NEW PARLIAMENT.

Mihi indies magis animus accenditur cum confidero quæ conditio
vitæ futura sit, nisi nosmetipsos *vindicamus in libertatem*; nam,
postquam Resp. in *paucorum potentium* jus atque ditionem con-
cessit, semper illis *Reges* — vestigales esse — cæteri omnes,
strenui, boni, nobiles, atque ignobiles, vulgus fuimus, sine
gratia, sine auctoritate, his obnoxii quibus, si *Respub. valeret*,
formidini essemus. SALLUST.

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SEASONABLE HINTS

FROM AN

HONEST MAN.

THERE is scarcely an individual in the nation, whose thoughts have not full employment given to them by the accession of a new monarch to the crown. The lowest as well as the highest ranks in the community, look upon themselves as interested in the great event. Our tradesmen and manufacturers view it as promoting or checking the profits of their respective branches of commerce and occupations. Others again, who join idleness to affluence, are fond of the prospect of a new reign, merely as it will open new scenes to gratify their gaping curiosity. Even the fair sex find themselves deeply concerned in the important crisis; and, perhaps, are puzzled, whether they have most reason to lament the sable uniformity of dress to which they are doomed; or to rejoice, that they have been already entertained with the melancholy splendor of a royal funeral, and are soon to be feasted with the pompous shew of a coronation. — If we step into the political world, the agitation and
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hurry increases; the hopes and fears of every one, who looks upon himself as connected with government, are all afloat; ambition is at work in every corner; and from the servile attendant in the drawing-room, to the stately minister in the council chamber, we find nothing but the eagerness of expectation, or the apprehensions of disappointment, painted in every face.

Amidst this strange tumult of business and of idleness, of condolance and congratulation, though I am too inconsiderable a member of the community, to think I have any right to mix as an actor, on the theatre of public life; at the same time, I have so much vanity as to think myself considerable enough to be indulged in giving my sentiments how I could wish others may act. Not biased by the prejudices of party; neither afraid of losing a place, nor hoping to gain one, I feel myself impelled, almost irresistibly, in the infancy of his majesty's government, to throw into the hands of the public, with all the decency and moderation of the most loyal subject, yet with all the freedom and impartiality of the warmest patriot, some thoughts that have occurred to me on this most important occasion. If I can suggest any thing that may co-incide with the sentiments of those who have power to carry my honest wishes into execution, I shall think myself amply rewarded; if I fail in this, I shall still hope that my readers, though they may call in question my abilities as a writer, will, at the same time,
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do justice to my zeal as an *Englishman*; and, at least, look upon this, my first, and I believe last attempt, as an author, to be a proof of my sincere attachment to his majesty's person and government; and dictated from a heart that pants with an ardent zeal to see *him* great, and his people *happy*.

Happy as it was, that providence extended the life of his late majesty, till a successor arrived at an age that spurns the fetters of a *regency*, and delivers the nation from the confusion incident to a minority; it is still greatly to be lamented, that his reign was not prolonged till he had composed that ferment which now rages throughout Europe; that so he might leave no other care to his royal grandson, but the easy and pleasing one of blessing his subjects, by cultivating the arts of foreign and domestic peace. But alas! the accession of his present majesty hath happened at a busy and perplexing crisis. He hath been forced to lay hold of the helm of state while the vessel is still tost by a violent storm; and, though not in danger of shipwreck, liable to many accidents before she can be brought into a safe harbour.

But it is not my intention to enlarge upon the difficulties of this sort, with which his majesty begins his reign. With regard to the war, and our behaviour towards our allies, there can be but one path to walk in; and when the method of conduct is agreed upon,

consequences, however disagreeable, will be less perplexing. Adherence to the same counsels by which the war hath hitherto been conducted, will still, it is to be hoped, produce happy effects; and it must be left to time, and to circumstances, to find out a proper means of reconciling the losses of our allies on the continent of Europe, with our own advantages in America; and of extricating them from the danger that threaten their possessions, without sacrificing our own conquests; conquests purchased at the expence of so many millions; which our enemies, we are certain, are unable to recover by force, and which therefore, cannot be lost but by weak negotiations.

What principally hath given rise to this my attempt as a writer, is my eagerness to express, in the most public manner, my hopes and my wishes that, to the necessary difficulties, occasioned by the war, under which his majesty has mounted the throne, unnecessary ones may not be superadded, by the avarice or ambition of courtiers, by the claims and importunities of candidates for power and places; by the struggle of parties, and the competition of factions, each aiming to be the monopolizers of the royal favor, and forcing themselves, if they can, into employments.

I am very sensible of the great nicety of my subject, but I shall endeavour to treat it in such a manner, that every friend of the constitution may be convinced of the rectitude of my intentions,

tions, and own that I am not altogether unworthy to be looked upon as one of those *honest men*, whose assistance his majesty has called for from the throne.

Were it possible for me to be conveyed, for a few moments, to the closet, under the form of some *Mentor*, I should think myself obliged by every dictate of loyalty, and every counsel of prudence, to recommend and enforce this most seasonable piece of advice;—to be upon the guard against the artful applications of every set of courtiers; and by a proper firmness to convince every one that we have a monarch on the throne, who knowing that he reigns in the hearts of an united people, is determined not to resign himself to the insolent pretensions of any confederacy of ministers.

The importance and seasonableness of such advice is self-evident. For if any such confederacy should be forming, or already formed (though I cannot suppose any body so weak, or so wicked as to engage in it) the manner in which it is treated, at its first appearance, will have very decisive consequences; in short, it will, in a great measure, determine, whether the prince upon the throne, is to reign over a free and united people, with that full extent of power which our well-poised government allows to the crown, or whether he is to content himself with the shadow of royalty, while a set of *undertakers* for his business, intercept his immediate communication with his people, and make use of the legal pre-

rogatives of their *master*, to establish the illegal claims of factious *oligarchy*.

It were no difficult task, perhaps, to draw a ridiculous enough picture of the groupes of candidates for court-favors, on such occasions as the present; and to describe with that ludicrous severity which it deserves, the insatiable thirst of those who, though they have been intoxicated, for years, with the most copious draughts of the cup of power, are still so unreasonable as to be craving for more, to the utter exclusion of numbers, who have an equal right to taste it in their turn. But the scramble for power and places, which of late years hath been, as it were, the great aim of almost every one who approached the throne, and which I so ardently wish may not revive at this juncture, is more the object of grave sentiment than of giddy ridicule: We may laugh at the private foibles of the great, but cannot help being shocked at their public corruption. They are fit subjects for the poet's satire, when we view them confederating at a *horse race*, or a *gaming table*; but of the patriot's indignation, when we consider their conduct in *public life*, and observe their factious combinations to lay violent hands on every lucrative employment; true to their own mercenary concerns, but regardless of the national interest; devoted to some minister, at whose levee they bow with fervility; and scarcely owning an obligation to the royal hand, which decency obliges them to kiss.

It must give every lover of his country real
fatigues.

satisfaction, that those eminent counsellors, who advised and conducted the present war, are continued in employment at this time, that they may not be deprived of the opportunity of displaying their abilities, in extricating the nation out of those difficulties and distresses, in which, during their counsels, it was first involved. But at the same time, I should be sorry to see any minister, or knot of ministers, permitted to grasp universal influence in *domestic business*, and forcing his majesty, at his first entrance upon government, to nominate to all the employments about his person, in his family, and in his revenues, not those whom he himself thinks worthiest and likes best, but those whom the confederated Party-leaders may think most likely to be dependant on themselves, and whom they may make use of as their instruments to extend their influence, nay, to perpetuate their power, in opposition to the royal inclination.

A king who would hope for a reign of consequence, and ease, must begin with such a steadiness of conduct, as may convince every one who approaches him, that he knows it is the duty of his ministers to depend on him, and has too much spirit to depend on his ministers. If he shews his inclination to continue particular persons, in high office, he must at the same time, shew his resolution to break all factious *connections* and *confederacies*.

A new king surrounded by a set of grasping courtiers, each aiming at the management of him, like a virgin beset by her lovers, must,
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upon occasion, be able to check their importunity, and steadily say, *No*. The judicious use of this short, but expressive monosyllable, will save a world of trouble, and be the only means of preserving his future honor and dignity. But if once it be discovered, that he durst not say this on one occasion, his independence will, on every occasion, be attacked, till, at last, by repeated compliances, he sees himself doomed, through his whole reign, to suffer violence from every one who shall have insolence enough to make the attempt.

In a word, if a monarch do not begin his sovereignty by such a conduct, as will let the candidates for power see, that he will not permit them to force it from him, he will at last see himself the servant of his own servants; the fountain of all honors, without being able to bestow any; with a right to dispose of every office however great, without being allowed to name to any one of the lowest; and if ever he should endeavor to extricate himself out of this unhappy state, he will then learn, by dear-bought experience, that it is much easier to preserve independence, than to throw off subjection; and that one moment of steadiness, at the beginning of his reign, would have saved him years of trouble and distress, in the progress of it.

These reflections have too solid a foundation in sound policy to be controverted in general; but the particular application of them to the present state of affairs in this country, will, I foresee,

foresee, meet with opposition. While they coincide with the sentiments of every honest and independent person in the nation, they may perhaps be disagreeable to certain individuals, who having long basked themselves in the warm sunshine of a court, may, at last, think they have a right to contract within their own narrow sphere, every spark of that luminary of majesty, which was intended to diffuse light and heat to the numerous and wide-extended objects capable of receiving its influence.—To talk of the independency of the crown, on its own servants, to such persons, will have the air of a new and dangerous doctrine; and we shall hear them, no doubt (concealing, with their usual modesty, their private views under the appearance of public virtue,) urge the necessity of the king's submitting to give up the management of his affairs, and the exclusive disposal of all his employments, to some minister, or set of ministers, who, by uniting together, and backed by their numerous dependents, may be able to carry on the measures of government.

This strange doctrine having been but too fashionable of late years, and, in consequence of it, confederated ministers having but too frequently, in the former reigns, offered the most unwarrantable violence to majesty, I shall think myself very laudably employed, if, without meaning to attack individuals for what is past, and studious only to guard against what is

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wrong for the future, I offer some seasonable reflections on this great and national subject.

It used to be looked upon as the perfection of the *English* government, that the supreme power is divided between the three estates of the kingdom, but according to the doctrine of the above-mentioned monopolizers of places, the present distribution of power is a faulty one; and, in order to correct this fault, a cabal of ministers must be allowed to erect themselves into a fourth estate, to check, to controul, to influence, nay, to enslave the other three. If the advocates for governing by such a system would speak out, they must admit this to be the principle on which all their politics proceed; and when once they have been brought to own that it is their intention to annihilate every constitutional power in the British legislature, by the influence of a private unconstitutional association of party leaders, we shall then have much the same sort of esteem for them, that we should have for a confederacy of a few lawyers, who could have the modesty to assert, that in order to carry on the business of Westminster-Hall, as it ought to be, the whole of it should pass through their hands only, and they be allowed to bully the judges, and to bribe the juries into such decisions as they shall dictate.

If ministers should insist, that none but their dependents must be put into employments, upon pretence that if those employments be conferred on others, the just designs of the king
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will meet with opposition, what is this but to say, in other words, that private interest, avarice, or ambition, are the only motives that guide them in their conduct, with regard to the public ; and that they will oppose those very measures they now support, unless they be allowed to pay themselves for supporting them ? Can there be any thing so unworthy of Englishmen, men of honor, and good subjects, as an open avowal of such scandalous combinations, which appear to be formed upon this single principle of serving the crown, only for their own convenience, and of opposing its measures, for every reason, but a conviction that they are wrong ? Can there, therefore, be a lover of his country, who would not wish to see the prince upon the throne set all such confederacies, if any should arise, at defiance ? And can there be the least doubt, that the nation, in general, would lift itself on his side, if any set of all-grasping courtiers should have the insolence to make attempts on his independence ? The English are too sober and sensible a people, to prefer the dark and arbitrary influence of *Aristocracy*, to the known legal claims of a limited *monarchy*. Their sovereign therefore, will never want friends to stand by him, when the competition is not between prerogative and liberty, but between king and ministers : and as a king in this country, will find *no party* strong enough to support his government, when once the body of the nation sees him do wrong, so, on the other hand, if he does what is right, safe in the affections of a great and generous

people, no faction need ever appear so formidable, in its influence and number of dependents, as to force him to give way to their insolent attempts to perpetuate their power, in opposition to his inclination.

To hear some folks talk of the necessity the crown is under to submit to the direction and management of confederated ministers, one would imagine, that the times of the *old barons* were revived, when by their feudal superiorities, military vassals, and numerous retainers, they could, at any time, if they united together, measure swords with their sovereign : but thank God, those times have been long at an end, and the great men of this country have no means of making themselves considerable, and of procuring dependents, but such as the crown furnishes them with, by intrusting them with the direction of that influence which is its own, which may be resumed at pleasure, and which whenever it is resumed, must leave the greatest leader of a ministerial confederacy, as insignificant as he was before thought formidable. If there have been instances in modern times, that seem to contradict my assertion, this hath not arisen from real power in the subject, but from weak timidity and ill judged compliance in the crown. An indolent master, who gives up the entire management of his fortune to a favourite steward, permitting him, for a number of years, to appoint or to displace all his domestic servants, to raise their wages, or to grant them annuities out of the estate, without ever controuling

trouling his intentions, or calling him to account; such a person as this, it is natural to suppose, will find his steward's influence more extensive than his own, in the family; because the individuals, who compose it, see no probability that he ever means to extricate himself from bondage. But when once they are convinced he really intends to dismiss his governor, and to do his own business, the domestics will then find it their interest to be dutiful; or if they should be so far imposed upon, as to be induced to join in a confederacy, to oppose their master's intended change, one who gives good wages, need not fear to get a new set of servants, and therefore can have no reason to bear with insults from the old ones.

The application of this, to the case before us, is obvious. Our kings have sometimes given such unlimited indulgence to their ministers, that those put into employments, scarcely ever looked beyond the ministers to own an obligation. The natural consequence of this was, that ministers employed the influence of the crown to make it submit to themselves; and having once acquired a number of dependents, purchased by doleing out the king's bounty, they had the insolence to urge the number of their dependents, as a reason why the king should bow to their ministerial omnipotence.—A prince who can be intimidated by the cabals of those who derive all their importance and influence from the unlimited disposal they have had of his favours, scarcely deserves

deserves pity, because he has the means of liberty, but wants spirit to assert it. Let him once shew that he is determined to be looked upon as master, and he will soon feel he will be respected as such: and if any over-grown minister should think this an encroachment on his office, and begin to shew his inclination to distress government, which he no longer can manage without controul, he will soon find that his supposed friends were only the friends of his power, and will continue firm to him no longer than while he has possession of the means of gratifying them. In the age we live in there are but few individuals, I am sure there are but few retainers of a court, so little attentive to their own interest, as to forget that the crown is permanent, and administrations temporary; that a king is such all the days of his life, and that ministers exist only by his pleasure. To suppose, therefore, that a discarded leader of party, should find his myrmidons willing to continue faithful to his standard, when it is set up in opposition to that of the king, is to suppose them capable of a conduct to which their leader himself must know they are entire strangers.

The reader will readily suppose that these reflexions are made without a view to *particular facts*, or without a suspicion that any ministerial cabals are now forming against the crown; and that they are thrown out here only to shew, in case such cabals should be formed, at any future period, that they never
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can be formidable to a prince, who knows the extent of his own importance, and is resolved not to sacrifice it to the ambition of a few subjects.

Indeed, in one case, and in one case only, can the sovereign of this country, ever fear the resentment of a disgusted minister, or of a discarded party; and that is, when a plausible pretence for opposition can be taken up, and the bulk of the nation induced to interest itself in it, and to believe that it was formed by the leaders of it, not on account of their disappointments in the struggle for power, but on account of their honest disapprobation of the public plan of government.—But I think I may venture to give it as my opinion, that, were it possible to conceive there could be, at present, an intention in any combination of men to oppose government, they could not find such a pretence for opposition, as they could lay hold of with any appearance of decency, or hopes of success.

When I say this, I am not ignorant of the public distresses, and of the uneasiness every real *patriot* must feel, and express, when he sees this poor country bleeding at every vein; borrowing annually twelve millions, and spending, at least, twenty! already incumbered with a debt of one hundred and twenty millions! and this amazing load still daily increasing!—When the lover of his country reflects coolly
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on this its present situation, the most melancholy reflections must succeed to the exultation of conquest. But whither will these reflections lead him? Not surely to charge our distresses to his majesty's account, who found us in such a state, that we cannot retreat from our enormous expences, without ignominy, though God knows, how long we may be able to persevere in them!

If then the distresses of the public furnish no object, at present, for the opposition of the patriot, who has had no share in promoting the measures that have so involved us, much less can they be made a handle to inflame the nation, by any of those who were in power in the late reign. Can such a person, in case he should fail in acquiring that share of influence in the cabinet, he formerly might have, stand up, with any consistency of character, to throw the first stone at measures, entered into during his own administration, and for which himself and his associates were answerable? Could it be borne to hear him expatiate on the immense increase of the national debt; on the too great share we have taken in the continental war, and on the glaring want of oeconomy with which it has been conducted?—No, the honest, the independant part of the nation (the only part of it that government can wish to please, or fear to disoblige) would be able to trace, under this veil of patriotism, the real character of disappointed ambition,

bition ; and would disregard the barking of this state *Cerberus*, whose mouth, they know, can, at any time, be stopt, by throwing him his sop.

But I state a case which I am confident will not happen. For though we had not a sufficient security from the experience we have had of the disinterested loyalty of those who have of late been accustomed to power, that they are incapable of engaging in any combinations to distress government, there could not be the least reason to suspect that any of them could be so *imprudent*, as to attempt it, at a time, when they must be conscious they stand greatly in need of the protection of the crown, that their former administration may not be remembered to their disadvantage. In a word, should ill-informed patriotism, or mercenary ambition, ever think of charging on this reign the bloodshed which may ensue, and the additional millions of debt, which the present war may still make necessary, his majesty may well be defended by saying, that he suffers from the dismal consequences of measures entered into by former administrations ; and the words of Shakespeare may be well applied on this occasion :

*Shake not thy gorey locks at me,
Thou canst not say that I did it.*

As I cannot figure to myself a more unhappy situation than that of a Prince, who, with

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all the abilities requisite for his station, and with all, the inclination to support his own virtuous principles, and his independence, finds himself reduced to the mortifying necessity of submitting to be dictated to by a cabal of ambitious subjects, it is with singular pleasure I have been able to remark that the circumstances under which his majesty begins his reign, give us a prospect, that no aristocratic usurpations will be attempted, or if they were attempted, that they would prove as unsuccessful, as they are odious.

But however flattering these circumstances are, it is not impossible that unconstitutional restraints on majesty, may again be attempted by associated ministers. It will not, therefore, be unseasonable, to look back a little to those times, when we know government was engrossed by such ambitious leaders of party; and without exaggerating their insolence, and the fatal consequences which the public felt from their plan of administration, we shall be able to draw such a picture of it, as will strike every lover of his king and country with indignation, and make us unite with heart and hand to prevent its revival.

I shall consider the reign of confederated statesmen in two lights; first, as it offered personal indignities to the king; and secondly, as it naturally gave birth to such arts of government as were subversive of public liberty, and destructive of the constitution.—The history of
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of this country, in times not very remote, will enable me, alas ! to give but too many melancholy proofs of each of the above particulars.

Though the plan of fettering majesty in the chains of party, was at least coeval with the *accession* of the royal family ; ministers, at first, could not guess how far they might venture to push their usurped influence. Our history, since the times of the *barons*, had furnished few or no instances of *oligarchical* restraint put upon the crown ; it required time and experience, therefore, to model this new system of modern politics. And surely nothing but experience could have proved it to be possible, that a time should ever happen, when the dignity of the king could be trampled upon without regard to decency ; and when ministers might presume to carry their insolence so far as to set their master at defiance, and to govern in spite of him. — I need not enter into many particulars, to enable my readers to guess, to what period of our history I now allude.

The court casuists in the reign of *Charles I.* in order to prevail upon him to pass the attainder of Lord *Strafford*, found out a curious distinction between his private conscience, as a man, and his public one, as a king. Some ministers, in a more modern reign, seem to have taken the hint from this ; when they practised a doctrine, which shewed it to be their resolution, that the king should be for-

ced, in the most indecent manner, to divest himself of the feelings of a man ; and in order to have the ambition of a few subjects gratified, should not be permitted to resent personal insults, and indignities.

What should we think of soldiers who threaten their general to abandon his standards, when the enemy is in fight, mutinying not for want of pay, but in hopes to extort from him unreasonable gratifications ? What opinion could we have of a crew of sailors who, when their ship was in danger of sinking, should refuse to stand to the pump, and threaten to go off in the long-boat, unless the master should submit to be put in irons, and allow them to divide the cargo ? or to use an illustration perhaps still more similar to the transaction now alluded to, what notion could we have of the characters of a set of domestics, who, in order to force an indulgent master to submit to them, should insist on his dismissing every friend from his house ; require him to take into his family some of their own dependents, who had personally used him ill, and whose presence might be necessary to assist them in enslaving him ; and finding him averse to compliance, should take occasion, when they saw his house on fire, to threaten, in a body, they would abandon him, at that dangerous conjuncture, unless he yielded immediately to all their insolent demands ?——
——The questions I now state, but faintly describe the odious circumstances of an *association*
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of ministers, within the memory of many, but exactly when, I won't say, who finding that, though they had forced their sovereign to submit to many mortifying indignities and galling concessions, he had too delicate a sense of honour not to make resistance against some of their demands, had recourse to an act of factious insolence, of which no preceding part of our history furnished an example. For, at a time when every honest subject ought to have had full employment in soothing the distresses of majesty, and in defending the tottering throne; when faction should have suspended its ambitious intrigues, to oppose daring disaffection, and too successful rebellion; at that very instant, the nation saw with amazement a *formal confederacy* entered into by the king's servants, associating to resign, in a body, in hopes that their unhappy sovereign, alarmed to be abandoned, at such a crisis of public danger, might be induced to comply with every demand of their insolent ambition, which, hitherto, he had refused to gratify.

If my memory fails me not, it was not much above a week after a second victory gained over the king's forces by the rebels, that this rebellion in the cabinet broke out; a rebellion which impartial posterity will, perhaps, look upon as equally *unnatural* with that of the rebel lords, who were then in arms against the crown, whose open treasons could scarcely exceed in guilt, the secret cabals of the *associated band of ministers*, who, by their conduct on
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this occasion, convinced the world that it was the principal article in their political creed, that they had a right to force the king to constitute them his council of regency, and that the throne was not to be supported, unless the prince who sat upon it consented to bear their yoke.

Happy had it been for the prince, on whose independence this amazing attempt was made; happy had it been for the public if he had thrown himself upon his parliament then sitting, for protection against the insolence of a set of men, whom he had gratified with power, loaded with riches, and invested with honors! Had he done this, powerful as the confederacy might think themselves, the English generosity would have fired; the cause of injured majesty would have become the cause of a loyal public; and those ministers, whose undutifulness had only risen from excessive indulgence, would have learnt, that a king of England need only *feel* his own consequence to make those feel it who insult him.

The transaction above referred to is pregnant with so many odious circumstances, that I should have been glad, for the honour of our country, to have drawn a veil over it. But my argument naturally led me to take notice of it; and every candid reader must admit that I have touched the wound with the gentlest hand; and with the single and honest intention of warning every future confederacy of party leaders

ers, to avoid such personal insults on the sovereign, as *history* must relate with severe animadversion, *patriotism* read with indignation, and *candor* itself can scarcely endeavor to extenuate. It was the fashion of the times we have been speaking of, to use such factious methods of acquiring and preserving the power; and much is to be said to lessen the guilt of those who are linked with a party, and bound, as it were, in honor (at least thinking themselves so) to attempt things as an aggregate body, which, as individuals, they perhaps disapproved of, at the very time, and which, certainly, they could not but condemn, as soon as the violence of party zeal subsided, and cool reflexion was permitted to operate on probity and good sense.

If ministerial combinations to engross power, and to invade the closet, have produced such personal insults on the *king*, the consequences of such attempts, with regard to the public, were equally odious. For truth obliges me to confess, that however favorable to national freedom the true genuine principles of *whiggism* be, some individuals of that denomination, (who, in times happily at an end, got possession of the royal family) were the great promoters, if not the first introducers of such a plan of wicked policy, as had a natural tendency to sap the firm foundation, of British liberty, and to destroy the independence of the constitution.

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The charge I now bring may seem severe ; but the facts, on which it is built, are notorious. — Such is the happy distribution of supreme power in this country, that the sovereign finds it his interest to pursue no measures but such as are agreeable to the representatives of the people ; and the necessity of obtaining parliamentary concurrence has increased since the revolution ; from which period, by separating the civil list from the other charges of government, annual sessions must be held, and annual supplies granted. Ministers, therefore, who wanted to force themselves into employments at court, saw that they should gain their point, if they could convince the sovereign that they had the power over parliament. But how could any particular set of men acquire such a power ? It was impossible that the whole body of the people, in this great country, should concur in enslaving their sovereign and themselves, to any junto of their fellow-subjects ; and it was obvious that a parliament *chosen freely*, and composed of gentlemen of real property, whose inclination it would be to *vote freely*, were not likely to act the despicable part of tools to a narrow party-cabal of ambitious courtiers.

In this situation, therefore, there was no alternative ; the scheme of putting the sovereign into the leading-strings of party must be abandoned, or else such methods put in practice, as might check the freedom of election, and procure such a parliament as might support a particular

cular set of ministers. The real disaffection that existed at the accession of George the First, furnished those who then got possession of the closet, with a specious pretence to employ secretly the court influence upon certain important occasions; and having once prevailed upon the king to look upon such *secret* influence, as necessary for the security of his family, they knew it would answer a more immediate purpose to themselves, by giving them the means of perpetuating their own power; a point, in their opinion, not too dearly purchased, by a most enormous expence of public money*, and by establishing venality and corruption into a system, as necessary engines of government.

To consider the English constitution in theory, its stability would be supposed to arise from parliament. But parliaments, when once they become appendages of administration, must open the widest door to slavery. In this case, they become a mere *state engine* in the hands of the minister, to *stamp* a value on the basest metal, and to give every bad measure the sanction of national consent. And no chains are so heavy as those which we put on ourselves; for we shall bear from our representatives, what

* From 1707 to 1717, the whole amount of the money issued on account of the secret services, was only 337960 l. 4 s. 5 d. But, from 1731 to 1741, the same number of years, how amazingly it increased? For, within this last period, there was issued, under the same head, 1453400 l. 6 s. See the report of the secret committee.

prerogative, openly exerted, never will venture to put in practice.

Happy is it for the constitution, that such over-ruling influence over parliaments has ceased! Had the system of modelling them, by ministerial lists, and ministerial interposition continued, parliaments, by degrees, would have lost their dignity. The landed gentlemen would have found it impossible to get seats; and brokers from Change Alley (who pay no taxes for their money) and placemen from the treasury (for whose benefit taxes are paid) would have, in time, had the honor of passing votes to lay annual burthens on the landed property, in which they themselves are but little concerned. And if ever this time had arrived, every lover of his country would have wished to see an end put to those very assemblies, which by keeping up the empty forms of the constitution, would only have hastened the loss of real liberty; and verified the wise observation, that England never can be undone but by a parliament.

If the reign of monopolizing statesmen be destructive of liberty, and of the independence of parliament, no wonder that it should be attended with other collateral mischiefs. In such times, we need not be surprized if the true interests of the kingdom, with regard to foreign affairs, be neglected, by those who look upon every object as subordinate to that of perpetuating their own power. And, with regard to domestic policy, there can be but little chance
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to see much attention to what is *right* in a public view, when private interest is the avowed principle of those who have power. Through every department of government, those persons only will be preferred, who are most likely to do the minister's business, without regarding how unfit they are to be trusted with that of the nation. The favors of power will be prostituted to the most profligate; and it will be the sum of all merit, to have interest in some borough, or to be related to those who have. — In a word, the spirit, the morals, the religion, the reputation, and importance of the nation will decay, and the *body politic* droop under universal *corruption*.

Surely I shall be pardoned for the warmth with which I have expressed myself, in speaking of the times when government was seized upon by a confederacy of ministers; and every friend of monarchy, every lover of liberty, every one not bred up in the school of ministerial corruption, will heartily join me, in my ardent wishes to see this system for ever exploded; in a word, to see his majesty lay hold of the uncommon advantages, with which, as we have observed above, he ascends the throne, to keep himself free from its dominion.

But why should I content myself with expressing my wishes on this head? — We can already appeal to facts which give us well-grounded hopes, that the sovereign now upon the throne will adopt those principles, which

appear so necessary, to make his reign glorious, and his people happy.

Here then let me congratulate my fellow-subjects, on the pleasing prospects which already open to our view. In this infancy of his majesty's government, he hath conducted himself, in such a manner, as gives us just grounds to form the highest ideas, both of his good dispositions and of his abilities; to expect that this will be a reign of dignity and importance, a reign in which the ministers will depend on the crown, and not the crown on the ministers; in short, a reign in which the hateful and worn-out distinctions of party will be abolished, and government carried on, without having recourse to the mischievous arts of corruption, and without reviving the odious tyranny of ministerial dictators.

Such hath been the insolence of former administrations, that a king of England hath frequently seen himself unable to confer the smallest employment, unless on the recommendation, and with the consent of his *ministers*. If I may be allowed to credit *some* facts, which every one of my readers must have heard, — it should seem that the long-wished for time is come, when subjects may expect to receive favors from the crown, without owing the obligation to all-directing ministers.

But it is not merely from this circumstance, that we hope for a new *æra*; for we see that
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his majesty is resolved to put himself at the head of all his subjects, by abolishing all the distinctions of party, by accepting with paternal affection the assistance of *every honest man*, to support the throne; and, as a mark of his royal confidence, placing in the most honorable stations, near his own person, some, who have not surely owed their places to ministerial importunity, because they have always opposed ministerial influence.

The circumstances attending this most important measure give us room to hope for the most flattering consequences. Some few of the *proscribed party*, have, indeed, in former reigns, been put into employment; but, though individuals were gratified, the party still remained in opposition. Now, every thing is different. Those of that denomination now taken into employment, are followed by the whole body of their friends to the royal presence, where they mix, unplaced and unpenfioned, with the numerous throng of dutiful subjects, and give us just reason to exult with Shakespear, that

*England never did, and never shall
Lye at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it did first help to wound itself.
Now these her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in
arms,
And we shall shock them.*

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But, has not this very measure given an alarm? Has it not been thought a hardship on those who have been enriched with all the rewards of government, these fifty years, to have so much as one employment given away, from their party? This language, we are certain, cannot be held amongst ministers themselves, though it may be fashionable amongst their humble dependents, who have always the *loaves and fishes* in their eye. But I would recommend it to such gentlemen, to moderate their resentment on this occasion. For it is ten to one, that if they shew it any where, but in their own private *juntos*, they may be addressed in the words of Horace;

*Lusisti satis; edisti satis, atque bibisti:
Tempus abire tibi est;—*

You have rioted long enough, gentlemen, at the expence of the public; you have had places and pensions, and jobs, and contracts, and subscriptions, in abundance:—it is time now for you to think you have had your full share of lucre, and to make room for others who have been fleeced to gorge you with plunder.

It is scarcely possible to avoid being ludicrous when we take notice of the insolent pretensions and complaints of the mob of placemen (for their leaders do not surely join in the cry) on the alarm that the bottom of government is to be widened. I wish some body would take the trouble

ble of making a computation how much money has been received by a placeman who has, we will suppose, a salary of three thousand pounds a year, and then set it against the money that has been paid by a country gentleman, for the same number of years, as taxes on an estate of the same value; and then see whether it can be borne, that the same persons should be constantly continued in employment, while all equally offer their service. I am but very awkward at such computations, but I think it will not be difficult to ballance accounts between the placeman and country gentleman.——I have heard, above twenty years ago, that a proprietor of land paid above thirteen shillings *per* pound in taxes to the public. The many additional loads laid upon us since that time, induce me to think that, at present, he pays full fifteen shillings. Nor will this computation be thought very wide from the mark, by any one who will reflect, that besides reckoning the heavy sums paid in hard money, we include in this calculation the endless variety of taxes that raise the price of every convenience, nay, of every necessary of life, and encrease our expence insensibly, in every article we have occasion to purchase.——If we proceed then, upon this foundation, we shall find that a country gentleman, with a rent-roll of 3000 *l. per an.* will have paid in taxes, in the course of twenty years, at least *forty five thousand pounds*: while a placeman, who is paid 3000 *l. per annum*, as a salary, during the same period, will have put into his pocket,

ket, *sixty thousand pounds* of the public money. Can there be equity in such glaring inequality? And can it be strange, that there should be uneasinesses and discontents in the kingdom, while the many are *impoverished*, to enrich the few? A prince therefore cannot begin his reign with a more endearing measure, than to satisfy the body of his faithful subjects, whose burthens are so grievous, that no particular set of men is to expect to be exempted from feeling the weight of them; while others equally worthy of his protection, are doomed to be *hewers of wood*, and *drawers of water*, with nothing to boast of, but the comfortable employment of paying exorbitant taxes: taxes! too great a part of the amount of which, they have seen employed to carry on that system of monopoly, by which they themselves were oppressed, and to furnish the means of luxury and profusion to their oppressors.

When the private interest of a few individuals is affected, we frequently see that they have art enough to get their cause to be looked upon as the cause of a whole party. I should be sorry if this happened to be the case at present; and yet, we have been told, that, because a few *tories* have got places, attempts have been made to induce the *whigs* to consider this as an attack on their whole body: but if the *whigs* can be so far deluded as to believe this, it will give us a remarkable proof, that *party is the madness of the many, for the gain of the few*. For does

any candid and intelligent man seriously believe, that at this time of day, there subsists any party distinction amongst us, that is not merely nominal? Are not the *tories* friends of the *royal family*? Have they not long ago laid aside their aversion to the dissenters? Do they not think the toleration and establishment, both necessary parts of the constitution? And can a *whig* distinguish these from his own principles? Must not, therefore, every honest man see and confess, that the cry against widening the bottom of government, is propagated by some, who, finding their own views of ambition or gain affected by this measure, endeavor to render it odious amongst the body of the party, who otherwise would have seen no reason to be alarmed, even in point of private interest? For all that the *tories* possibly can hope for, or expect, is that a few marks of confidence may be given them at present, as a proof, that the *proscription* is at an end, and as an earnest, that in the future disposal of court favors, when there are vacancies by deaths and not by removals, they will stand an equal chance of being taken notice of, with the rest of his majesty's good subjects. And here I may ask, has so much as a single *whig* been displaced, to make room for a *tory* successor? Have not the few places conferred on the formerly excluded party, been such as his majesty has created, in his own bed-chamber, by increasing the number of his servants? Why therefore should there be complaints, where there is so little foundation?

tion? Indeed, the thing speaks for itself. The ground of the uneasiness is not that any *whig* has been displaced, but that a nation of *whigs*, as we may now justly be called, must cease for the future to be governed by the narrow maxims of faction.

If it must give every friend of the *royal family* a sincere satisfaction, to see the *proscription* of the *tories* ended; there is another equally pleasing prospect now opened to our view,—we may hope, that the days of undue influence over *parliaments* never can be *revived*.

The original pretence for issuing money for purposes not publicly avowed, was to prevent the *jacobite* party from prevailing in their elections: but the extinction of *jacobitism* has put an end to that pretence.

If money were to be issued at present, for the purposes we speak of, whom could it be employed against?—Against gentlemen who have given convincing proofs of their loyalty to the present royal family; have heartily concurred to support government in parliament, and have offered their services at court, in the present reign, which services his majesty has been pleased to accept. And shall it be supposed, that gentlemen who have been thought worthy by the king, to be placed in the most honorable stations in his family, should be opposed by the ministers, as unworthy to be admitted
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into parliament?—The supposition is highly absurd ; and, therefore, I must beg leave to express my disbelief of a report, very current, *that when a great personage was applied to, to know how much money should be issued, for a certain important purpose, his answer was, Not a farthing.*

I make no doubt, such an application would have met with such an answer ; but, I cannot believe the application was ever made, and am inclined to think, that the report must have been raised by some enemy of the great minister who has the direction of money matters. For to suppose that the *corruption* of former days should be revived, when the reason given for its being first introduced has entirely ceased, would, in effect, be to tell us, that we are never more to have an independent parliament. If at such a time as this, when the only contention throughout the kingdom, is, who shall give the strongest proofs of attachment to the king, the people of England are not thought fit to be trusted with the free exercise of their right to choose their representatives, this would be a public declaration to all the world, that they never ought to be trusted with it, and that *corruption* is to be ingrafted into our constitution. But surely this doctrine cannot possibly be adopted by the great minister whose name has been made use of, on this occasion. He has by his past conduct shewn, that he deserves no such reproach, and we have no reason to fear, that one who did not exert an undue ministerial influence, in

choosing the parliament now sitting, should have the least intention to exert it at the ensuing election. He has besides, other things to think of at present, more adapted to his office, and to the exigencies of the state; and, instead of examining lists of boroughs, and qualifications of candidates, he will be better employed in examining into the exorbitant contingencies of our German and American commissaries and contractors, that there may not be a deficiency of above *four millions*, besides the *twelve* that are borrowed, for the service of next campaign.

The above reasons seem sufficient to induce any one to disbelieve the report of money asked and refused; but I think there may be something *still* stronger said on the subject.—The minister who could propose to the crown, at present, to employ secret-service-money, for domestic purposes relative to the ensuing election, could not make such a proposal without betraying a secret he had better keep to himself,—I mean, that he desires the *fingering* of the public money, only to serve his own private views of ambition. Every candidate throughout the kingdom, at the approaching period, will be the king's friend, and willing to support his government. It is indifferent to the crown who is chosen, whether it be John or Thomas, when both of them are equally good subjects. A minister, therefore, who should think of employing the money of the crown, at this conjuncture, to oppose and support particular

ticular candidates, would shew plainly that he means not so much to do the king's business, as his own, by increasing the number of his *own* immediate dependents, and forming a party who may owe their *obligations* to himself singly, and encourage him to grasp universal influence, in spite of the royal inclination. Far be it from me to suspect, there can be any ministers at present, who have such views; but I am sure, if they should desire to be allowed to employ money for secret domestic purposes, it would look as if they had.

I am very sensible, that there are many well-meaning persons who seem to think, that without *corruption*, there might be danger apprehended from *Democratical* encroachments on prerogative.—But they who are really struck with the above objection, certainly forget that tho' the wings of *prerogative* have been clipt, the *influence* of the crown is greater than ever it was in any period of our history. For when we consider, in how many boroughs the government has the voters at its command; when we consider the vast body of persons employed in the collection of the revenue in every part of the kingdom; the inconceivable number of placemen, and candidates for places in the *customs*, in the *excise*, in the *post office*, in the *dock yards*, in the *ordnance*, in the *salt office*, in the *stamps*, in the *navy* and *victualing* offices, and in a variety of other departments; when we consider again the extensive influence of the *money corporations*, *subscription jobbers*,

bers, and *contractors*; the endless dependence created by the obligations conferred on the bulk of the gentlemen's families throughout the kingdom, who have relations preferred, or waiting to be preferred, in our *navy*, and numerous *standing army*; when, I say, we consider how wide, how binding a dependence on the crown is created by the above enumerated particulars, no lover of monarchy need fear any bad consequences from shutting up the Exchequer at elections; especially, when to the endless means the crown has of influencing the votes of the *electors*, we add the vast number of employments, which the fashion of the times makes the *elected* desirous of, and for the obtaining which, they must depend upon the crown.

But, I believe, I have expressed myself improperly, when I spoke of the influence of the crown; for to say the truth, we may have observed from experience, that in proportion as the crown had the power of *obliging*, ministers, by being permitted to assume the universal direction of all those who had been *obliged*, have too frequently been enabled to make use of the dependents on the crown, to bring it into subjection to themselves; and at the same time, while they became formidable to the prince, they have had it in their power to make attempts on the liberties of the people. For when the crown influence lies dispersed in its several distinct channels; when every placeman, or public officer, is left at full freedom to vote for the candidate he likes best; numer-

ous as these gentlemen are throughout the kingdom, they never can be supposed united in any scheme to hurt public liberty. But when they are to pass in muster before a first minister; when they are taught to look upon him as their commander in chief, and know that disobedience to his orders will be construed *mutiny*, and punished as such; when instructions are dispatched by the parliamentary undertaker, to every servant of the crown to support and oppose particular candidates; when every placeman, from the *excise-man* and *tide-waiter* up to the *commissioner* and *courtier*, has a ministerial list delivered to him; when the influence of the crown, I say, is thus moulded into one connected mass, and trusted to the direction of a single minister, What object can be strong enough to resist its force? And how fatally will it operate in destroying the independence of parliament, even though the *flood-gate* of *corruption* should be stopt?

If the interposition of a lord of parliament, in any particular election, be carefully provided against (as we know it is by the standing orders of the house of commons) as inconsistent with the constitution, how much more daring an attack is it upon the very essence of parliament, to see a minister presume to *undertake*, not for one or two members only, in places where he has a natural interest, but for hundreds of representatives, in boroughs scarcely known to him by name? What notion can any one have of the freedom of elections, if the writs for a
new

new parliament issued by the crown, are accompanied by private instructions from a minister, like so many *congè d'elires*, which must implicitly be obeyed?

I think it would be no difficult matter to draw a pretty ridiculous representation of a first minister, issuing his orders to the numerous standing army of placemen, and making out a list of members for a new parliament: and I would recommend it to Mr. Hogarth, to try his fertile imagination, in a drawing for a *political print* on this subject. I would have the *great man*, surrounded by all his trusty dependents and clerks, drawn, seated at a table, on which should be placed, variety of books and papers, distinguished each by its proper label. Here we might read, *lists of voters* under the *excise*, the *customs*, the *war office*, &c. &c. *lists of sheriffs* and returning officers; and exact accounts of the state of *admiralty* boroughs, *navy office* boroughs, *ordnance* boroughs, *cinque port* boroughs, *post office* boroughs, &c. &c.—Before the *great undertaker* should lie open a list of the members last chosen, which he is to alter and amend as he thinks proper. In this situation, methinks, he will seem like some author, when his devil has just brought him a fresh sheet from the press, to be corrected; and like him too, he writes a *stet* against such names as he intends to be chosen again; D for a proscribing *dele*, against those he intends to be left out; and Q's, for farther information about others, of whom he has some doubts. One of the

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clerks

clerks who attended on such an occasion, (I am sure no body can guess either at the minister or clerk) told me, that there were certain mysterious letters against almost all the names in the list; but the meaning of these, he said, he could not explain, but perhaps I might guess at them: M. M. was written against many of them; against others was K. M.; and against a great many I. M. This, I own, puzzled me a little at first; but, upon consideration, I decyphered them thus: *stet*, it seems, was always writ, where M. M. was against the names; and therefore I concluded those letters must mean *ministry men*, such as would be staunch friends to the great man, in opposition to a *greater*, if necessary, and be always ready to give as much money as should be desired, in hopes to have a moderate share of it properly applied, to encourage merit, and reward faithful services.—I could not well explain K. M. but should have guessed it stood for *king's men*, or *members*, if I had not learnt from my friend, that as many of these were to be left out at the new election, as with decency could be opposed. As for I. M. I am pretty sure, it was meant for *independent members*, a strange set of old-fashioned rustics, who bring notions of public spirit, oeconomy, and inquiry, with them to parliament, and who, therefore, well deserved, what I found was the case, to have the dreadful *dele* invariably put opposite their names.

My informant gave me a specimen of the conversation on this curious occasion, between the *great man* and his trusty friends. One of them, for instance, raised an objection against a certain person's name being left in the list, saying, "It was notoriously known that he visited at a certain great house near ——" "Aye, says *my lord*, that is true; but he has leave to do so; and that rather turns to our account; besides, he is quartered for 500 l. a year, on a *North American* contract." — "Pray what does your lordship think of sir *Thomas Touchit*?" — "Oh, replied *my lord*, he has leave now and then to vote against us, and no body knows but myself that he has a private pension." — "My lord, (says another) *Harry Simple* seems to me to be a little suspicious, and far from a sure man." — "Don't trouble your head about him, replied his *lordship*; he is safe enough; I saved his uncle about seven years ago, from being hanged. He was a notorious smuggler, is now very rich, and his nephew *Harry* expects to be his heir; besides, he is quartered on a patent place, in the customs." "Captain *Wronghead*, says *my lord*, I doubt will be distressed about a qualification; but he will have no scruple to swear to such a one, as we can get him; for he is a very honest fellow, and will do any thing to serve his friends."

But I ask pardon, for aiming at ridicule, in treating of an encroachment on the constitution, which is more properly the object of
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of indignation. Without pretending, therefore, to fix the exact time, and place, when and where, the above ministerial picture had a real existence, it is with pleasure I observe that such unlimited influence over the electors, who are connected with, and dependent on the crown, cannot be exerted at present by any minister; because, it must then be exerted in direct opposition to the declared intention of the *first personage* in the kingdom, who, we are well assured, has absolutely forbid any of the *public offices* to intermeddle in *elections*.

If the *Roman* generosity, in proclaiming liberty to the cities of *Greece*, was received with rapture; with equal rapture, may we well suppose, have the vast body of our fellow subjects, whose stations make them dependent on government, received that unexpected emancipation from ministerial tyranny, which now leaves them at full liberty to vote according to their own sentiments; places them on a level with the rest of their free-born countrymen, and frees them from the dread of being thought disrespectful to the *throne*, though they should be honest enough to disregard the injunctions of the *treasury*!

That his majesty has left the servants of the crown in this happy state of independence, with regard to elections, is a fact that should be made known, in every corner of the kingdom. And what minister dares attempt to fetter them, in opposition to this royal declaration? No such attempt, we may be certain, will be

publicly made; and, if there be any private efforts made, to defeat his majesty's noble views, of restoring the independence of the constitution, every lover of his country should be watchful to get intelligence of the facts, and to preserve the proofs of them, that proper examples may be made; and that all the nation may know, that subordinate placemen, who refuse to obey a ministerial summons to vote at *elections*, are in less danger of losing their employments, than the minister who shall presume to dictate to them, in opposition to the inclination of the king, and in violation of the independence of the constitution.

History furnishes us with an instance of a people so degenerate, as to reject liberty, when offered.—If the inhabitants of *Great Britain* would avoid the infamy of the old *Cappadocians*, let the patriotism of their generous monarch rouse them from that state of indolent security, and venal dependence on ministers, which hath made but too dangerous a breach in the fortress of liberty. Their common father calls out to them to save themselves, and if there be any spark of public spirit left; if they be not more attached to faction than to the constitution; if they do not think it of less consequence to preserve their country free, than to procure to themselves some dirty advantage for linking in party to destroy it; if such slavish and mercenary principles do not constitute the character of this nation at present; we may now flatter ourselves, to see the
almost

almost lost powers of the British constitution restored to their original vigour.

Here then it will be natural to ask, what are those steps, which every lover of his country should take, at the ensuing election, that his majesty's royal intentions may not be defeated?—The answer to this question is obvious. Let the country gentlemen, (I mean gentlemen of every denomination, who have connection with landed, fixed property) throughout the kingdom, strenuously endeavour to get into Parliament; let them exert their natural interest, in their respective neighbourhoods, and not allow their boroughs to be stolen from them, by mean, low people, who come down to them, at the time of election, with hands full of money, and never see or think of them afterwards.

Though the public money is no longer to be employed, in support of *court candidates*, it may well be supposed, another set of opposers will start up against the country gentlemen. The *monied* men of the metropolis will think this stagnation of secret service money, a lucky incident to get themselves chosen; will gladly offer their services to any minister; and by advancing each his own money, supply, in some degree, the want of the usual fund. But, if the men of property, in every county, would form themselves into associations, to oppose every money-jobber who shall attempt to invade their boroughs, these *merchant adventurers*

ers in politics would soon repent of their electioneering. Loaded as the gentlemen of *England* are, with taxes, and perhaps exhausted by former struggles at elections, few of them can be supposed be in such circumstances, as to engage singly with an over-grown *director*, who, instead of paying any thing to the public burthens, is annually increasing his capital, by preying upon the necessities of the state. But what no individual is equal to, on his own bottom, supported by the joint interest, and by a joint purse of all his neighbours, will easily and cheaply be accomplished.

If our house of commons is to be filled with men who are in trade, and who get themselves elected, only to be in the way of their trade; the *contracts*, the *jobs*, the *subscriptions*, the *loans*, the *remittances*, &c. &c. with which a minister can benefit them, are such a temptation to them, to assist in involving the nation in dangerous projects, and ruinous expence, that I know not whether we have most reason to dread a majority of greedy *stock-holders*, or of indigent *placemen*, for our representatives. Every one therefore, who wishes well to his country, who would hope to see a parliament attached to the king and the constitution, and not subservient to ministerial influence and direction, naturally will turn his eyes on the country gentlemen of *England*, at this critical conjuncture, and call upon them to exert themselves with vigour, to wrest the honour of being representatives of the people, from a
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set of men, who either have no *property* at all, or such a sort of property, as bears no share in the expences of the state.

If the shutting up of the exchequer, and the emancipation of placemen, are strong encouragements to the gentlemen of property, and great estates, to attempt getting themselves chosen at the next election, the peculiar situation of the kingdom, at this juncture, is another most powerful motive, to animate them to the conduct I recommend.

Every great and national object, that can deserve the attention of the present age, and fix the happiness or misery of this country, to latest posterity, must necessarily come under the consideration of the next parliament. — Diseases in the body politic, equally with those in the natural body, have their crisis; and whoever sits down to ruminate on the present state and situation of this kingdom, if he has any share of political sagacity, will see but too much reason to conclude, that by a train of measures, adopted too long in former times of peace, the constitution has been undermined; and by a wantonness of expence in former wars, and in the present, we are, at last, brought almost to the very brink of a precipice, which imagination can scarcely survey, without horror.

To recover this constitution before it be entirely lost, to inquire into the causes of the
increase

increase of our immense debt, and to devise means of lessening it, must, therefore, be the great object of the ensuing parliament, otherwise ruin and destruction will at last overtake us.

But can this be a season for such inquiries? When all the attention of parliament must be confined to furnish fresh sums to defray the amazing expence of a consuming war, can this be a time to set on foot plans of reformation?—No, surely;—and while I confess the fact, I lament it as an addition to our misfortunes. Till peace be happily restored, nothing can be done to save the nation; and every day that peace is deferred, will increase the difficulty of saving it. Like a prodigal heir, who spends annually four times more than the real income of his estate, we must, if our expences continue, at last be unable to find security for a fresh mortgage, or a fund to pay fresh interest. In this alarming situation, it is the only consolation to us, that the bravery of our troops by sea and land, has humbled the power, destroyed the trade, and ruined the navy of our enemy; and that though *France* is still but too able to cope with us on the continent of *Europe*, with which we are unhappily connected, we may hope from the multiplied desolations of the poor country, now the seat of war, that it will be impossible much longer to continue the horrid scene of bloodshed.

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It is not therefore an unreasonable presumption, that the first sessions of a new parliament, instead of laying on fresh burthens, and adding to our already intolerable debts, will be more agreeably employed in deliberations concerning the terms of peace.——With regard to these I shall only observe, that though it will require all the abilities of our ablest negociators, to settle the jarring interests of the powers at war, we may be confident that the essential interests of *Great Britain* will be taken care of. Blessed with the best of princes that ever filled a throne, who, *born and educated amongst us, and glorying in the name of Briton*, has no object so dear to him as the happiness of his country, —— we need not doubt that he will forward the much wished for, and much wanted return of peace; and when once he has extricated the nation from that distress in which he found us involved, that he will co-operate with an honest and independent parliament, to restore an almost lost constitution.

Aspice venturo lætantur ut omnia sæclo!
Jam nova progenies! Virg.

Had the long peace that succeeded, from the treaty of Utrecht, to the breaking out of the Spanish war in 1738, been properly employed, in lessening our debts, and reforming abuses connected with them, we should not, at this time of day, have had any gloomy apprehensions concerning their consequences. But, by an uninterrupted course of borrowing, a total neg-

lect of paying off, and by a corrupt want of œconomy in spending, we have, at last, been sunk into such an abyſs of diſtreſs, that if providence had not raiſed up a prince, who ſcorns and renounces thoſe arts of government, which have been too fatally put in practice, by corrupt adminiſtrations, our conſtitution, nay our very exiſtence as an independent kingdom, ſeemed verging to annihilation.

An honeſt and independent parliament, ſeconded, nay, rather excited by the patriotiſm and virtue which now adds freſh luſtre to majeſty, will do wonders ſtill towards ſaving us. Should the national debt (at once the cauſe and effect of the languiſhing ſtate of conſtitutional freedom) be ſuffered to remain at its preſent enormous height, we need not be ſurprized if, like a bubble filled with air, it burſt of itſelf, as the *South Sea ſcheme* formerly did. And if this ſhould happen, let any true Engliſhman think what extenſive deſtruction muſt be ſpread over the whole kingdom. Thouſands, nay millions, muſt be brought to immediate and irremediable ruin. And what rage, what ſlaughter, what anarchy this may occaſion, it is better for us to try to prevent, than to deſcribe. Credit is a thing of ſo delicate a nature, that the leaſt diſtruſt may occaſion the total loſs of it: when that is gone, all ſinks at once with it; but the hand of the legiſlature, by feeling the pulse of the nation, may apply ſuch parliamentary remedies, as may ſupport credit, and think of ſome ſcheme for a regular, though ſlow payment, of our debt.

One circumstance alone is too alarming not to be carefully attended to: foreigners have got a vast share of this debt into their hands. Perhaps our amazing loans of late years never could have been filled, had not annual millions of foreign money poured in upon us. But if this has been a temporary relief, and enabled us to go on with the war, think how it will distress us in time of full peace. If we suppose foreigners to be in possession of thirty millions in our stocks, (much of which has been bought in at twenty-five and thirty *per cent.* discount) the interest of this money will drain the kingdom of perhaps a million and a half every year. And when once it happens, that foreigners draw more from this country for their interest in our funds, than we gain from them, by balance of trade, she shall be actually in a state of incurable consumption, and the whole enquiry will be, how long the patient may be able to drag out a miserable existence.

What scheme can possibly be devised, to lessen the intolerable burthen, it is not for me to determine: but this every one may foresee, that much will depend on the future state of our commerce. If by an increase of that (an increase we may reasonably hope for, if our America and West India colonies are not checked by French encroachments) the produce of the *sinking fund* is augmented, the religious, and inviolable application of this annual sum (without which no plan of payment can ever succeed)

will, in case we be so happy as to enjoy a lasting peace, ease this poor country of great part of that load under which she now sinks, and under the weight of which, I fear, it will be impossible for it ever to rise again, to make efforts to save itself from the future attempts of our inveterate and insidious enemy.

But if the increase of commerce, and the religious application of the *sinking fund*, will be a foundation for devising some scheme of reducing our debt; under such a prince as we now have, and with such a parliament as we now wish to have, what may we not also expect, by a due attention to national œconomy? — Were a minute enquiry to be made into the unnecessary expence in collecting our revenue, and into the infinite and abominable abuses and frauds that are practised, in almost every branch of it, I make not the least doubt, that such an annual saving could be made, as would be of the highest consequence in the present distressed circumstances of the state. Want of œconomy, and culpable profusion, will soon disorder the affairs of the richest person; but one whose estate is loaded with tenfold mortgages, must be a madman, who goes on in a course of wanton riot, and suffers himself to be preyed upon by a swarm of unnecessary, dishonest, and expensive domestics. Were an honest parliament to look into the management of our *custom-house*, and there to observe, that there is scarcely a single place that is not executed by deputies,

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if not by the deputies of deputies; were they to carry on their inquiry through the many offices that have the care of every other part of our income; they would, without abolishing one place really useful, or diminishing one salary more than it ought to be, make retrenchments that would, in a course of few years, ease us of the load of millions.

The single article of unnecessary pensions, which times of corruption have so amazingly increased, would be an annual fund, to enable a virtuous monarch, oppressed by his greedy courtiers, to lend a most effectual assistance towards the glorious work of saving the state. Such hath been the fashion of the times, that pensions have been asked, for every reason but the single one, for which they ought to be given,—the indigence of the pensioner; nay, they have been increased, in proportion as the persons who obtained them were opulent. To such an unhappy state hath the crown been reduced, that almost every *great man*, who is turned out of employment, or who retires from it, though he is master of a noble estate, and has added to his wealth by his places, thinks he has a right to be put upon the list of *pensioners*, and to have thousands a year settled upon him for life. In order to expose the absurdity of all such extravagant profusion of the public money, consider how many persons are rendered miserable, by this seeming piece of good nature? What loads we entail upon our
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unhappy posterity, whose teeth will be set on edge by the four grapes their great, great grandfathers have tasted, to feed one luxurious and expensive man? — If the pension be 4000 l. a year, four thousand middling families must contribute to bear his extravagance: twenty shillings a year must be continued on 4000 houses, to enable him to make a birth-day dinner, or to stake his thousands at a Pharoah table. For the future let us denominate pensions, by the name of taxes; and say that my lord such a one runs away with the *fortieth* part of the *salt duty*; that another spends about *two thirds* a year, out of the tax on *tallow*; and that a third drinks prodigiously deep, from the severe additional duty on *Porter's ale*.

But besides devising means of payment, an honest, and independent parliament will find it incumbent on them, to enquire immediately into the first rise, and the rapid progress of our present amazingly *multiplied* incumbrances.

If we should take up the consideration of this important affair, from the year 1716, when the sinking fund was first established, or from any other later period, we shall find that scarcely any of the debt which we now groan under, has ever been accounted for; and I fancy it will be extremely difficult ever to account for it properly to the public. Not one, perhaps, for many years, of the money-offices, has ever thought of passing any account; and

a *paymaster*, who has been dead some years, when he was asked how he intended to pass some intricate accounts, had the honesty, or rather the effrontery to own, with a smile, that he never designed they should be passed. I wish this may not be a principle adopted by our public officers in general, who without fear of inquiry, or censure, daily suffer most amazing sums to pass through their hands, which I am sure can never be accounted for by the regular ways of the Exchequer. How is it possible, for instance, to produce satisfactory vouchers for the incredible amount of our German contingencies? Can the confused expences of our West India, and American expeditions, ever be sufficiently explained? — And surely it is highly unreasonable that privy seals should be granted, to indemnify those who are accountable for the expenditure of such sums; at least till the *chaos* has been brought into some order, by parliamentary examination.

But nothing will be more necessary, when the honest days of serious inquiry commence, than to sift to the bottom the state of the navy accounts. For the management of this branch of our service has been as extravagant, as it is little understood. I almost blush to mention (but the fact is too certain) that in this department particularly, estimates seem to have been annually laid before parliament, merely for the sake of form, and without the least intention of adapting the expence of the fleet to the supplies

plies asked and obtained. And this has now been practised so long, without controul, that parliaments have had but little or nothing left for them to do, with regard to this great article, but to find out funds to answer navy debts of *four or five millions*, which, from time to time, they are told have been incurred, by the *fiats* of a navy or victualling board. But the assumed authority of such subordinate offices, in loading the nation with debts without the knowledge of parliament, is not the only point that requires to be regulated; something must be done to introduce œconomy, the want of which, in the affairs of our marine at present, we have but too much to lament. Can it be surprizing, that our navy debt so amazingly increases, when we reflect that the public buys its stores, its provisions, hires its transports, and makes its contracts, at a monstrous disadvantage? Every one in the least acquainted with *the course of the navy*, must own the truth of this most melancholy fact; and, therefore, it will be highly worthy to be enquired into, and to be remedied by a diligent and honest *committee*, to whose care, we trust, the ensuing parliament will refer the state of our navy, which of late years hath been so copious a source of incumbrances. And while such an enquiry will be of infinite use, in preventing future unnecessary expences, in fitting out our fleets, may we not also hope it will be of real service to the public, to be able to calculate how many *millions* have been expended.

pended to refit our ships, shattered by braving the seasons, without blocking up the enemy, in the Bay of Biscay ; and to maintain our numerous squadrons, so long employed *in hedging in the cuckow*, in the river Vilaine.

There is one article in the accounts of the navy, of a very extraordinary nature. If any one will look into them, he will find that very considerable sums remain in the hands of several *right honourable* gentlemen, who *formerly* have been treasurers. These sums, indeed, are said to be retained till they may be able to pass their accounts, and to pay for the charges of passing them. But ought it to be permitted, to lock up for many years, so much public money, at a time when we are obliged to pay off one bit of paper with another, and are reduced to the comfortable situation of sending *navy bills* into the market, at a discount of above ten *per cent*?— Besides, may I ask where does that money lye at interest? and who is to have the advantage of it? These are questions very proper to be asked; and as I have before taken notice, that it has been usual to give considerable pensions, to every one turned out of employment, I hope that, at least, *treasurers of the navy*, who have perhaps fifteen or twenty thousand pounds of public money circulating in Change Alley, or fixed in mortgages, for many years after they have ceased to have the place, will be thought to have no claim to the king's bounty as pensioners.—Happy had it been for this country, if all our public officers had been animated by the

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same disinterested spirit, which has distinguished, in so remarkable a manner, the character of one gentleman, who once enjoyed the employment we now speak of! who quitted it, perhaps from a mistaken, but certainly from a generous delicacy of sentiment, worthier of praise than of imitation; and whom we now see retiring from the senatorial *chair* he has filled with so much dignity, for above thirty years, like another *Cincinnatus*; superior to the glare of proffered titles; rich in the applause of every honest man, and in the pleasing feelings of self-approbation, — a reward that the patriot alone can enjoy, and which accumulated treasures cannot purchase.

The sums retained by some late treasurers of the navy (on whom, however, I mean to throw no particular blame) call to my mind another article very little known, and hardly understood. I mean the state of the money due to the *marines*, who served during the last war. No account of this has been given, I think, ever since 1746. What then is become of the money? It is well known it has been issued by parliament, — and it is as well known that the poor officers and men, of the respective regiments, have never received it. — If they could not make up their regimental accounts in form, were not such persons the proper objects to be assisted by privy seals? Or if *they* were not to be so much favored, why, after so many years, has not the money in question been applied to the public service, and not left in the hands of a few grip-
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ing agents and secretaries, who have but too many other means of preying on the public ?

But, before the miserable condition of our finances can be effectually inquired into, besides appointment of *select*, nay *secret committees* in the house of commons, the public flatters itself, that the wisdom of the legislature will go farther, and erect, by act of parliament, a *commission for taking and stating the public accounts*: the commissioners to be chosen from amongst the greatest and ablest men of the kingdom, of both houses, or otherwise; to continue for years together (if it should be necessary) to sit where, and at what time they please; assisted by the ablest clerks they can find; and vested with unlimited power over all the public offices; to scrutinize into all the money transactions that have passed of late years; to make reports, from time to time, to parliament, of the progress they may make in cleansing the *Augæan stable*, and to call for parliamentary censures, if necessary. The public debt is a wound that must be probed to the bottom: not with a furious and malicious intent to search for, and to find out delinquents, but with an honest view, to save a sinking constitution, and the liberties of this country. But if any delinquents should be found out, though I could wish every thing was done with as little severity as possible, surely it is better that some few of the most culpable should be singled out, as they ought to be, rather than that the nation, by a general bankruptcy, should be thrown into

a most calamitous desolation. And may we not reasonably hope that an instance or two, of severe animadversion on domestic mismanagements will, for the future, imprint this important lesson on the mind of every one, whose office makes him accountable to the state, that no connections are strong enough to screen *corruption*, and that *public robbery* is as dangerous as it is criminal?

And now, after enumerating the above particulars which have occurred to me, on taking a cursory view of our present situation, it cannot surely be necessary, before I conclude, to mention any more facts (though many more might be mentioned) to convince my readers, how little is known of the real application of the immense sums voted of late years by parliament; and how necessary it will be to have a day of parliamentary reckoning for all these matters. The distresses of the state point it out: the voice of the nation loudly demands it; and, what is most considerable, we have a sovereign, who renounces the mean arts of venal administration, by which alone the much wished for inquiry, can be obstructed. — Motions for reforming any abuse, or redressing any grievance, will stand but little chance of succeeding, if opposed by the crown. But when the first advances towards this reformation, when the first steps towards this redress are made voluntarily by the crown, nothing remains to insure their success, but such a conduct in the people, as may shew, that they are

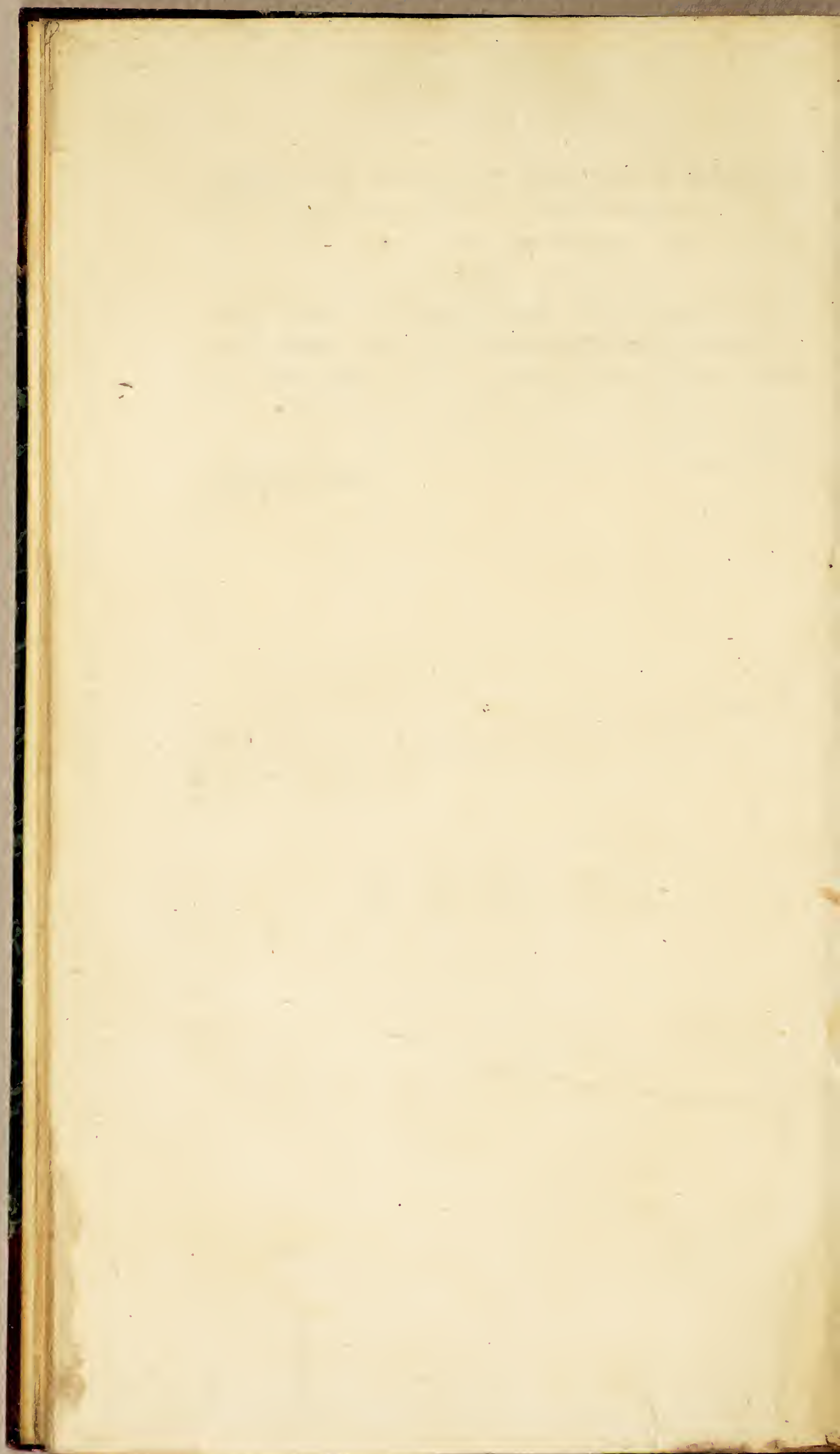
are not altogether unworthy of such a prince, and of such valuable privileges, as he calls upon them to preserve.

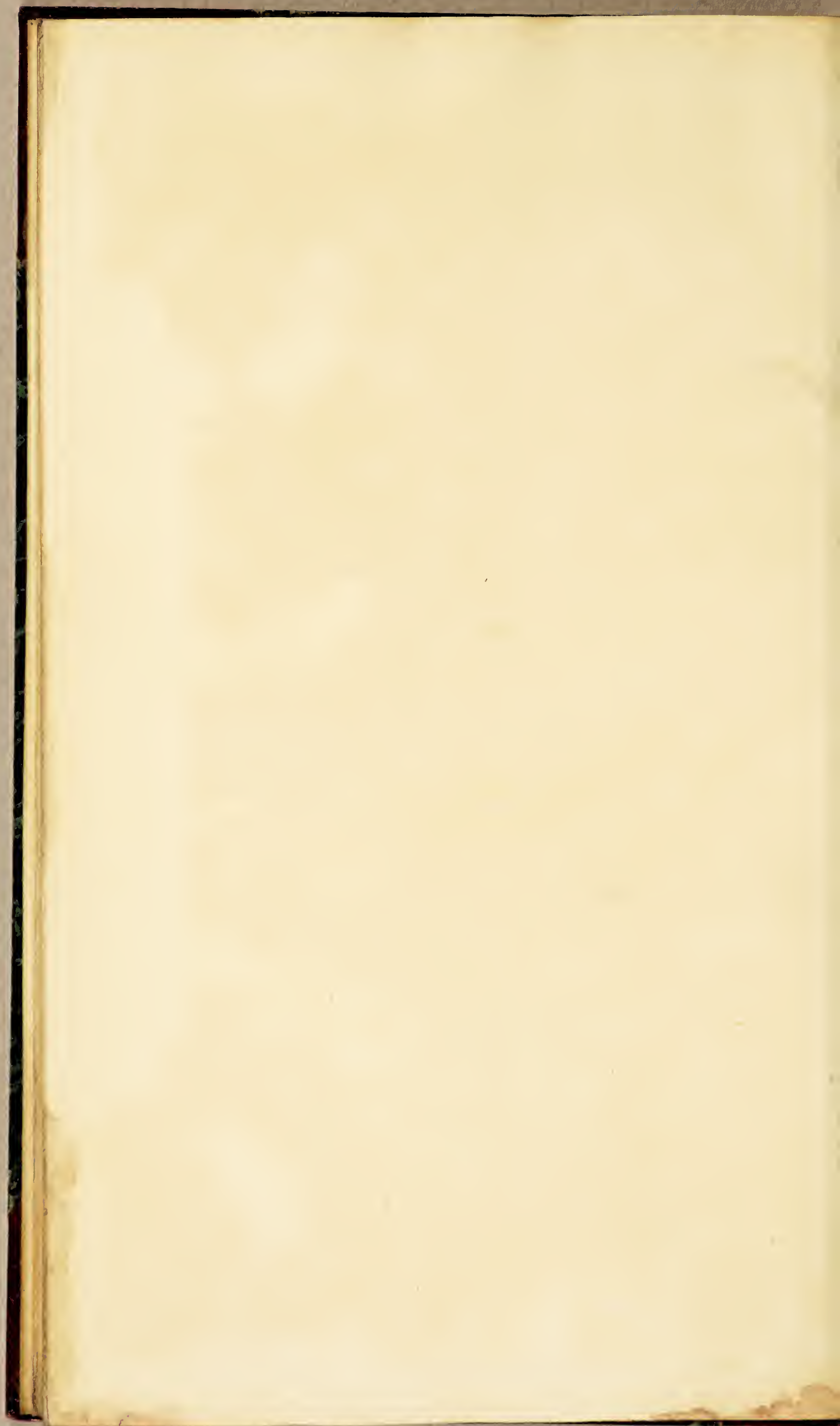
Let every *honest man*, therefore, exert himself at the approaching elections, that a parliament may be chosen of *honest men*; of men of independent fortunes, but loyal principles; men, whose inclination it may be to support the throne and the constitution, against ministerial insolence, and corrupt administration. And, if the landed gentlemen of *England* do their duty, on this important occasion; if they improve, as they ought to do, the advantages so generously offered to them, by the check given to the undue influence of government; corrupted as the morals of the electors, in too many of our boroughs are, by a long habit of prostitution, there is a fair and reasonable prospect, that we may, upon the whole, see such an assembly of representatives, as will co-operate with his majesty, in carrying his gracious purposes into execution.

I know too well, that there is not wanting amongst us, a set of men who affect to ridicule every attempt to reform the nation, and to restore the constitution, as a wild *Eutopian* scheme, and impossible to be put in practice; nay, who (as far as they dare venture to do it) try to render all amiable and virtuous inclinations contemptible, even in the *biggest person*, where they are most eminently conspicuous.— If candidates of this sort offer themselves to represent

present us, we cannot surely be so infatuated as to delegate to them a trust, which, we may be certain, they mean to betray. By trusting men of such profligate principles, on former occasions, the foundations of our present distress were laid; and *representatives* of a different character must now be chosen, if we would ever hope to emerge, from the dregs of *corruption*, into virtuous *liberty*, and constitutional *independence*.

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